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THEBES  
OF  
AESCHYLUS

TRANSLATED BY  
C. E. S. HEADLAM, M.A.

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# THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES OF ÆSCHYLUS

TRANSLATED FROM A REVISED TEXT BY

C. E. S. HEADLAM, M.A.

FORMERLY FELLOW OF TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE



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## PREFATORY NOTE

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THE *Agamemnon*, *Choephoroe*, *Eumenides*, *Prometheus Bound*, and *Suppliants*, which have already appeared in this series, were translated by Dr Walter Headlam.

The following version of *The Seven Against Thebes* is not from his hand, but the translator has been aided in the interpretation of various passages by notes which he left. The text used is that of Wecklein (1885). In a certain number of places other readings have been adopted, either due to Walter Headlam or known to have been approved by him. These, with the exception of some differences in punctuation, will be found indicated in the margin. In one or two lines where the text is corrupt, but not yet satisfactorily emended, a provisional reading, noted as such in the margin, has been adopted for the purpose of this translation.

C. E. S. H.



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# THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES

*DRAMATIS PERSONÆ*

ETEOCLES, brother to Polynices, and ruler of Thebes.  
A MESSENGER, employed as a scout.

CHORUS OF THEBAN MAIDENS.

ISMENE } Daughters of Oedipus, and sisters to  
ANTIGONE } Eteocles and Polynices.

A HERALD.

# THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES

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Scene : *The Acropolis of Thebes* (v. 226).

Time : *The morning of the day on which the seven champions of the besieging Argive army have resolved on an assault.*

ETEOCLES, *the present ruler of Thebes, whilst awaiting the return of the messenger he has sent out to reconnoitre, addresses an assemblage of Theban citizens.*

*Eteocles.* Citizens of Cadmus, it is fitting that whosoe'er at the helm of the [ship of] State watches over affairs, managing the rudder without closing his eyelids in slumber, should speak as the occasion demands. For if we should meet with success, the cause of it would be [put to the credit] of Heaven ; but if on the contrary—which may God forbid—disaster should occur, Eteocles alone would be much bruited up and down the city by the townsmen at the beginning of many a murmuring speech and lamentation ; of which may Zeus prove to the Cadmean city rightly named Averter.

You it now behoves—both him that yet falls short of 10 manhood's prime, and him that is past it but yet keeps up a vigorous growth of body, and (as is only right) each one of

the age for military service,<sup>1</sup>—to succour his city and the altars of his ancestral gods, so that their worship be not ever destroyed, and his children, and the earth his mother, kindliest nurse ; for she, taking upon herself all the cumber of their nurture, reared up young creatures moving on her genial plain to be a shield-bearing people, that ye might prove yourselves worthy of trust at the present need. 20

So now until to-day Heaven inclines in our favour ; for during all this time [the fortune of] war has mostly gone well for the besieged ; but now, as declares the seer, the feeder of birds who by ear and judgment, without the aid of fire, revolves [the import of] birds of omen with unerring art—he who is master of that kind of divination tells us that an Achaean attack, greater than any yet, is being discussed in the night and that they will plan an assault upon the city. Come, hasten all ye to the battlements and to the gates of 30 the defences ! Make speed equipped in full armour, man the breast-works, and, taking each his station on the platforms of the towers, stand fast and be of good courage ; nor tremble over-much at the crowd of aliens. Heaven will guide aright the issue. I for my part, also, sent out scouts and observers of their host, who are, I am confident, on no useless errand ; and, when I hear their report, I shall in no wise be caught by stratagem.

(*Enter the MESSENGER.*)

*Messenger.* Eteocles, most noble prince of the Cadmeans, 40 I am returned bringing clear tidings of what is going forward yonder in the host ; and am myself eye-witness of the facts. Seven warriors, gallant captains, having cut a bull's throat over a shield inlaid with metal<sup>2</sup> and touching with their

<sup>1</sup> ὥραν τὸν ἔχονθν ἐκαστον, ὡς τι συμπρεπέσ, [ἥστις altered to ὥστι M.].

<sup>2</sup> *Or*, iron-rimmed.

hands the bull's blood, called to witness Ares, and Enyo, and Terror that rejoiceth in slaughter, that, either they would sack the citadel of the Cadmeans bringing destruction upon it by force of arms, or in death would mingle their blood with this soil. And memorials of themselves, destined for their homes, were they hanging for their parents upon the 50 chariot of Adrastos, shedding tears—though no sound of complaint was on their lips; for a spirit of iron determination as of lions with battle in their eyes was inspiring them, kindling them with valour. And of this the report is not delayed by interval of time; for I left them in the act of drawing lots as to how each of them, receiving his post by the lot, should lead his company against our gates. Therefore do thou marshal with speed our chosen bravest warriors at the exits of the city-gates. For already nigh at hand the Argive army in full array is advancing, is raising the dust, and white foam from their horses' lungs is marking the 60 plain with spots. Do thou, like a good ship's-helmsman, secure the citadel before the blast of war rushes down; for the surge of their host is roaring over the land. So do thou in respect of this seize occasion, as may be most rapid. I too, for what remains, will keep a trusty eye on the watch all day, and thou by knowledge from clear report of what goes on without the gates shalt be safe from harm.

[*Exit MESSENGER.*

*Eteocles.* O Zeus, and Earth, and Gods who guard our city, and thou Curse the mighty Erinys of my sire, extirpate 70 not root and branch, I pray, in the utter ruin of capture by an enemy, our city which utters the speech of Hellas and the chambers of our homes! Let none ever restrain a free land and Cadmus' city with the yoke of slavery; but be ye our strength. And herein I am confident that I voice our common interest: for a city which prospers pays worship to her gods.

*Chorus.* I cry aloud for great and terrifying woes! The army is let loose, and has left its camp. Yonder is streaming a mass of mounted folk in advance. Dust high in air, 80 messenger though voiceless yet clear and true, convinces me. The rattle of shields stuns me,<sup>1</sup> . . . the noise of arms upon the plain . . . wings its way with a din that sounds in my ears, and roars like a resistless torrent dashing down a mountain side. (O gods and goddesses, avert the rising evil!) With a shout that comes over the walls the argent-shielded folk are on the move, pressing forward in orderly array against the city. Who then shall rescue us? 90 Who of the gods or goddesses will come to our aid? Shall I prostrate myself before the images of the divinities? (O happy Ones securely established!) 'Tis full time to cling to the images. What linger we bewailing? Hear ye, or hear ye not the noise of shields? When, if not now, shall we busy ourselves with suppliant rites<sup>2</sup> of peplos and of garland? I perceive a clattering. That was never the clash of a single spear!<sup>3</sup> What wilt thou do? wilt thou 100 desert thine own city, O Ares, old inhabitant of the land? O God of the golden helm, look thou, look thou upon the city which once thou didst hold dear.

Ye gods, who guard our land, come all ye to us: look upon a company of maidens who beseech ye in dread of slavery. For around the city, gathered by the blasts of 110

<sup>1</sup> ἔλε δέ μ' <ἀσπίδων πάταγος 83  
. . . >πεδί' ὁπλόκτυπ' . . . 84

emendavi quatenus pro certo emendari potest. ἔλε δέ με eodem sensu ac πατρὸς σκοπαὶ δέ μ' εἶλον *Suppl.* 794. causa corruptelae patet: scribae oculus ex πιδῶν ad πεδία aberraverat: Walter Headlam. [ἔλεεδέμας (with mark of query in the margin) πεδιοπλοκτύπος M. : πεδί' ὁπλόκτυπ' Seidler.]

<sup>2</sup> ἀμφὶ λίταν' Seidler; cf. *Suppl.* 817 [ἀμφὶλιταν' M.].

<sup>3</sup> The exaggeration of panic terror, i.e. they think they hear an army. Cf. Sallust *Catinline* 51.

war, a wave of slanting-crested warriors is dashing,—O Zeus, father all-accomplishing, save us from capture by the foemen!—and the Argives are encompassing the citadel of Cadmus, and there is a clangour<sup>1</sup> of martial weapons, aye, and in the horses' mouths bridles are rattling in deadly chorus. And seven leaders, conspicuous in the host for their lancer's harness, are standing hard by our seventh gate, having received their posts by lot.

And thou, O Pallas, Zeus-born Power that loves the fray, 120 do thou prove thyself deliverer of our city; and thou, Poseidon, steeded monarch who rulest the ocean with fish-spearing trident, grant release from our terrors. And thou, O Ares, (alas, alas!), do thou protect the city named from Cadmus, and manifest thyself her guardian kinsman. And thou, O Aphrodite, do thou as befits the ancestress of our race keep back the foe: for of thy blood are we sprung: crying aloud<sup>2</sup> we approach thee with prayers to thy god- 130 head. And thou, O Lycian king, prove thyself a very wolf to the hostile army, [in response] to the voice<sup>3</sup> of our sightings. And thou, O virgin daughter of Latona, do thou make ready thy bow.

Ah me, ah me! I hear a din of chariots round about the city, (O queen Hera!) the axle-boxes of weighed-down axles scream, (O Artemis beloved!) ah me, ah me! and the air a-quiver with spears is in a frenzy. What is our city 140 undergoing? What will become of it? Whither will Heaven yet direct the issue?

Ah me, ah me! A shower of stones is coming upon the battlements struck from afar, (O Apollo beloved!) there is a clatter at the gates of brass-bound shields—child of Zeus,

<sup>1</sup> *ψόφος* Wakefield [*φόβος* M.]

<sup>2</sup> *αὐτοῦσαι* Seidler [*ἀπύουσαι* M.]

<sup>3</sup> *ἀπύᾳ* (Hesychius *ἡπύη· φωνή*) Hermann [*αὐτᾶς* M.]

from whom comes<sup>1</sup> the sacred decision ending the strife in battle, and thou, O Onca, blest queen established before our city, come to the rescue of our seven-gated town.

150

O divinities all-sufficing, O ye perfect guardian gods and goddesses of this land's defences, betray not the war-wearied town to an army of outlandish speech,—Hear ye, hear fully the prayers of maidens which they offer with outstretched hands—

But,<sup>2</sup> O divinities beloved, encompassing the city as its deliverers show yourselves friendly to it. Take thought of 160 the ceremonies publicly performed, and taking thought of them protect them. Aye, and be ye mindful, I pray, of the city-festivals with abundant sacrifice.

*Eteocles.* You I ask, you intolerable creatures, Is it the best [method of bringing] safety to the city and confidence to this army here beleaguered, that you should thus prostrated before the images of our tutelary gods cry aloud and shriek, O abominations of the self-controlled? Neither 170 in dangers nor in welcome prosperity may I ever be companion of the female sex; for a woman, when she has her way, is a bold thing impossible to live with, and when she is terrified, is a yet greater mischief to home and city. So now ye, by making these flights hither and thither, inspire with your clamour spiritless cowardice in the citizens; and, though things outside are going as much as possible in our favour, yet we by our own folk are being ruined from within. Now if there be any that will not give ear to my authority—be it man or woman or aught neutral—against them shall a vote of death be cast,<sup>3</sup> and in no 180 wise shall [the condemned one] escape death from stoning

<sup>1</sup> παῖ Διὸς, ὃθεν von den Bergh [*καὶ Διόθεν* M.]

<sup>2</sup> λυτήριοι <δ>, answering μὴ προδῶτε above [<τ>] Seidler: λυτήριοι M.]

<sup>3</sup> βεβλήσεται Tucker [*βουλεύσεται* M.]

by the people. Outside matters are a man's business; let not a woman advise as to them. Remain thou within doors, and create not mischief. Hearest thou or hearest thou not, or am I speaking to a deaf woman?

*Chorus.* O beloved son of Oedipus, I shuddered at hearing the din of rumbling chariots, when the naves screamed as the wheels revolved, and the noise<sup>1</sup> of the guides in the horses' mouths—their fire-forged bridles. 190

*Eteocles.* What then? Surely the sailor never yet found means of safety by fleeing from the helm to the bows when his ship was labouring in the ocean waves?

*Chorus.* But it was in reliance upon the gods that I came out from the house<sup>2</sup> to the ancient images of the divinities, when the roar of the deadly pelting storm arose at our gates: then indeed was I impelled by terror to 200 supplications of the gods that they would extend their aid to the city.

*Eteocles.* Let your prayer be that the defences may keep out the foe. This will be for the gods to grant. But, all the same, 'tis said that when a city is taken, her gods desert her.

*Chorus.* Never during my life may this assemblage of divinities desert us: never may I live to see this city overrun by conquerors and their army kindling it with destructive flames.

*Eteocles.* I pray you be not ill-advised in thus calling to the gods. Obedience is the mother of Success, spouse of 210 one who gives safety. Such is the saying.

*Chorus.* 'Tis so. Yet is the might of Heaven above all: and doth oft in dangers, even after sore distress, lift the cloud of despair hanging over men's eyes.

*Eteocles.* Men's business it is to manage sacrifices and

<sup>1</sup> Reading provisionally *ἀπέβαν ανον.* in Paley [*ἀνπνων* M.]

<sup>2</sup> *πρόδομος*, cf. Aesch. *frag.* 386 [*πρόδρομος* M.]

consultations of the gods, when about to try the strength of their foes ; but thy part it is to keep silence and remain within the chambers.

*Chorus.* Through the gods it is that we enjoy a city unconquered, and that our defences keep off a horde of ill-wishers. What just censure objects to this [attitude of ours]? 220

*Eteocles.* I have no objection to your honouring the race of gods. But, that ye may not make the citizens lose heart, be quiet ; and do not over-much give way to terror.

*Chorus.* It was on hearing a sudden din that in trembling fear I came all in confusion to the acropolis, the abode of honour.

*Eteocles.* Do not ye, if ye hear of any dying or wounded, be eager to receive them with cries of sorrow. For the slaughter of men is that whereon Ares is maintained. 230

*Chorus.* Aye, and hark ! I hear the neighing of steeds.

*Eteocles.* Though thou hearest it, show not over plainly that thou hearest.

*Chorus.* The city groans from earth beneath, as though men were surrounding it.

*Eteocles.* Then it is enough that I should take measures about this.

*Chorus.* I am in fear : a battering is increasing at the gates.

*Eteocles.* Will you keep silence, and say nought about it up and down the city ?

*Chorus.* O ye assembled gods, desert not our defences.

*Eteocles.* Will you be silent—a curse on you,—and refrain from this talk ?

*Chorus.* Gods of our city, let me not meet with a slave's fate.

*Eteocles.* 'Tis thou thyself that art like to enslave both me and the whole city. 240

*Chorus.* O almighty Zeus, turn thy bolt against our enemies.

*Eteocles.* O Zeus, what a race of women hast thou given to us !

*Chorus.* Truly a miserable one—as are men whose city has been taken by the enemy.

*Eteocles.* Dost thou speak ill-omened words, and that whilst touching the images ?

*Chorus.* Through timidity fear runs away with my tongue.

*Eteocles.* If only thou wouldest grant a trifling boon to my request !

*Chorus.* Speak it as quickly as may be, and I shall quickly know.

*Eteocles.* Be silent then, wretched woman ; terrify not your friends.

*Chorus.* I am silent. In company with others I will endure my appointed fate.

*Eteocles.* This speech of thine I prefer to those others. 250 Now in addition come thou outside the [precinct of] the images, and implore the gods to be our helpers in victory: and, after hearing *my* prayer, then do *thou* loudly chant a solemn strain of well-wishing, the cry accompanying sacrifice [prescribed by] Hellenic custom, an encouragement to friends, removing thus their fear of the foe. And I to the tutelary gods of the country, both those that haunt the plain and those that watch over the market, and to the waters of Dircè—nor do I leave out Ismenus—do vow that we, when things have gone well and the city is saved, drenching with 260 blood of sheep the altars of the gods and sacrificing bulls in their honour, will set up trophies ; and upon the sacred buildings will I hang in front of the temples spear-won spoils of foemen, the vestments of our enemies.<sup>1</sup> Make

<sup>1</sup> In v. 263 πολεμίων ἐσθῆμασι is probably part of a gloss upon λάφυρα δαῖων.

such thy prayer to the gods, not indulging in lamentation ; nor with vain and threatening bluster, for no whit the more by that wilt thou escape thy destiny. For my part, I will go and station six champions against six with myself as seventh, as opponents to the foe in heroic style, at the seven 270 exits from the walls, ere messengers in hot haste and flying rumour of report arrive and set us on fire by [the urgency of] the need.

[*Exit ETEOCLES.*

*Chorus.* I make it my care : but through fear my spirit is not lulled to rest. Near to my heart, anxieties are kindling terror of the folk around our walls, as a timid dove dreads on behalf of her nestlings snakes dangerous to her brood. For 280 some are advancing in full force and close array against the towers, (what will become of me !) and some are hurling pebbles at our citizens exposed on both sides. By every means, O gods of Zeus' race, rescue the city and host of Cadmus' line.

290

What land better than this will ye get in exchange, if ye abandon to its foes this deep-soiled country and the water of Dircè, most healthful of all draughts that Poseidon the encompasser of earth sends up, and the children of Tethys ? Therefore, O tutelary gods, by sending upon <sup>1</sup> those outside 300 our towers disaster with slaughter of men and flinging away of shields, earn for yourselves praise in the eyes of these citizens ; and be ye securely established as rescuers of the city [in response] to our prayers.

For piteous it is to send to the Under-world, a prize of the spear reduced to slavery, an ancient city dishonourably brought to ruin in crumbling dust by an Argive warrior through the will of the gods ; and that these women should 310 be dragged away as captives, young and old (ah me, ah me !) by their hair, like horses by their manes, with tearing of their robes about them. The city groans being made

<sup>1</sup> κατὰ (with ἐμβαλόντες) βίψοπλον, κ.τ.λ.

desolate, as the captives of mingled speech<sup>1</sup> are carried away. I anticipate with dread a grievous fate.

Pitiful indeed it is that maidens of marriageable age, before 320 the rites which cull the flower of virginity, should pass from their homes on a hated journey,—what say you? I count that one who perishes has far better fortune than this,—for numerous (ah me !) when a city is captured are the ills it suffers. One drags off another, slays, sets fire to parts of the town : all the citadel is murky with smoke. Ares in frenzy, 330 subduer of men, is the inspirer—desecrating all ties of piety.

Tumults arise in the citadel, and the towered circumvallation<sup>2</sup> is pushed close to the town ; and man by man is slain with the spear; and wailing cries, choked in blood, of young children resound, cries of infants at the breast. And there are plunderings, near allied to dispersed flights: pillager meets with pillager, and the empty-handed calls to the 340 empty-handed wishing to have a partner, greedy each of them for a share neither less nor [only] equal. What after this is it natural to conjecture?

And fruits of the earth of all sorts strewn upon the ground cause sorrow as they meet the eye ; and sad are the faces of the waiting-maids. Freely is earth's produce swept a medley away in valueless streams. And young female slaves have new sorrows, unhappy in their union by right of 350 capture with some victorious warrior, since now that the foe is conqueror they must expect a nightly office to come, increasing<sup>3</sup> still their tearful griefs.

*Semichorus.* The scout, my friends, is bringing us, as it seems to me, some fresh information ; urging in haste the forwarding axles of his feet.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* including the female slaves, cf. v. 350 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> On the use of towers both in attack and defence, cf. C. W. C. Oman, *Mediaeval Warfare*.

<sup>3</sup> ἐπίρροθον· αὐξητικόν (m<sup>1</sup>).

*Semichorus.* Lo! the king himself, son of Oedipus, is here at<sup>1</sup> just the moment to hear the scout's report; and 360 haste makes his gait, too, uneven.

(Enter from opposite sides of stage ETEOCLES and MESSENGER.)

*Messenger.* I can tell from full observation the doings of our opponents, and how each has drawn his allotted station at our gates. Tydeus already at the gate of Proetus is fretting —yet the seer forbids him to cross the Ismenus, since the sacrifices are not propitious. But Tydeus in wild excitement and eager for the fray is uttering sounds like hisssings of a snake in the mid-day heat; and assails with taunts the seer, wise Oecleides, that 'out of cowardice he is shrinking 370 before [the approach of] death and battle.' Shouting such words, he shakes three overshadowing crests, the hairy plume of his helmet; and from beneath his shield bells of wrought brass are making a terrifying din. And upon his shield he bears a vaunting device as follows—a sky fashioned ablaze with stars; and in the middle of the shield a brilliant full moon, most august of the stars, the eye of Night, stands out conspicuous. In such wild exultation, with armour of boastful device, he is shouting on the river-bank; longing for the combat, like a horse fighting against the bit in his impatience who chafes as he hears<sup>2</sup> the trumpet-call. Whom 380 wilt thou station to oppose this champion? Who, when the bolts of the gate of Proetus are withdrawn, can be trusted to defend it?

*Eteocles.* At no man's fancy costume shall I be frightened. Your devices make no wounds: crests and bell hurt not without a spear-thrust. And as for this Night glittering

<sup>1</sup> *eis* Porson.

<sup>2</sup> Reading provisionally *κλύων* Tyrrwhit [*μένων* M.].

with stars which thou sayest occupies the sky upon his shield, perhaps the conceit<sup>1</sup> may prove prophetic to one I know. For if in death night descends upon his eyes, then 390 to him that bears it this high-vaunting device will prove itself rightly and correctly named, and he himself shall make this insolence prophetic against himself. Now against Tydeus I will station the brave son of Astacus here, as defender of the gate,—a man of right noble birth who worships the throne of Honour and detests arrogant speech; for idle in mean actions, but no coward, is he wont to be; and from the Sown Heroes, they whom Ares spared, his stock is sprung, and truly a native of this soil is he,—Melanippus. 400 The issue will Ares with his dice determine. Justice however, his near kinswoman, makes him her champion to keep off the foeman's spear from the mother who bore him.

*Chorus.* May the gods grant that our champion gains the victory, who in a just cause speeds forth to fight for his city. Yet I fear on behalf of my friends to look on deaths by bloodshed.

*Messenger.* To him may the gods so grant to be victorious. But at the Electran gate Capaneus is stationed by lot; a 410 giant this man—taller than the one before mentioned;—and his boasting words betoken thoughts unsuited to a mortal, and he threatens terrible things (which may the gods not bring to pass!) against our defences; for he declares that, whether Heaven wills it or wills it not, he will sack our town, and not even the wrath of Zeus striking down upon the plain in his path shall restrain him. Lightning flashes and thunderbolts he compares to the warmth of the noon-tide sun. And he bears for device a naked man carrying fire, and a torch ready for action is blazing in his hands; 420 and in letters of gold he announces, ‘I will burn the city.’ To a man like this do thou send—who shall engage with

<sup>1</sup> η' ννοία Dindorf [η ἀνοία M.]

him, who shall abide without a tremor so vaunting a warrior?

*Eteocles.* To this advantage of ours<sup>1</sup> [in his overconfidence] yet another is added [in his impiety].<sup>2</sup> Of a foolish mind surely his own tongue is true evidence against a man. Capaneus utters threats, prepared to carry them out,—and, slighting the gods as he exercises his tongue in foolish exultation, sends, though a mortal, swelling words ringing up to Zeus,—yet am I confident that against him 430 will justly come the fiery thunderbolt in no way to be compared to the warmth of the noon tide sun. And against him, for all his insolence of speech, is ranged a champion fiery of spirit, stalwart Polyphontes, one to be relied upon as a guard, by favour of protecting Artemis and with aid of the other gods. Tell of another that hath his post at some other gate.

*Chorus.* May he perish who makes great boasts against our city, and may a thunderbolt restrain him ere he burst 440 into my chambers, or ever with insolent spear make havoc of maiden bowers.

*Messenger.* Hear then, I will tell of him that next in order hath his station at the gates. The third for whom the lot leapt forth from the upturned helm was Eteocles, that he should lead his company against the gate of Neïs. And he is wheeling to and fro his mares snorting in their headgear, willing to meet their death at the gate; and, in barbaric fashion, the nose-bands filled with breathings 450 from the nostrils of his steeds are making a whistling sound. And his shield is blazoned in no mean style:—a man in armour is ascending the steps of a scaling-ladder to an enemy's tower, seeking to storm it. And this one too in a

<sup>1</sup> Or (with Blomfield), ‘In the case of this man too advantage is added to advantage.’

<sup>2</sup> Cf. v. 430.

string of letters cries that, ‘Not even Ares shall dash him down from the defences.’ So against this one do thou send him who can be trusted to keep the yoke of slavery from this town.

*Eteocles.* I will send at once this man here: and with good luck<sup>1</sup> . . . There now he is sent on his way, bearing 460 his boast in his hands, Megareus—the seed of Creon of the race of the Sown—who will go forth from the gate no whit alarmed at the noise of the snortings of excited horses; but either in death will pay in full his debt of nurture to the land, or having captured two men and the citadel upon the shield will deck with trophies his father’s house. Tell me of the vauntings of another of them. Spare me nothing in thy tale.

*Chorus.* Hail, O champion of our homes! I pray that our side may be victorious, and that defeat may be the portion of our foes. Even as with frenzied mind they shout boastful threats against the city, so may Zeus the avenger 470 look upon them in wrath.

*Messenger.* Another, fourth in order, having as his post the neighbouring gate of Onca Athena, is taking station by it with a shout,—the form and mighty bulk of Hippomedon. And at the mighty orb—I mean the circle of his shield—I shuddered, as he twirled it: I will not speak beside the truth. And no mean artificer was the contriver of the device, who wrought upon the shield a work of art<sup>2</sup> as follows:—Typhon sending forth from his 480 fire-breathing mouth black smoke, flickering sister of flame; and the rim running round the convex boss of the shield is made solid all round with coils of snakes. And the warrior himself raises ever and anon a shout, and inspired by Ares is wildly raving like a Maenad for the fray, glaring terribly.

<sup>1</sup> There is a lacuna, probably of several lines, at this place.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Theocritus xv.

The enterprise of such a man must be well guarded against ; for panic is being already boastfully predicted at the gate.

*Eteocles.* In the first place Onca Pallas, as having her abode near the city hard by the gate, loathing the warrior's insolence will keep him away, as it were a dangerous snake, 490 from her brood. And Hyperbius, stout son of Oenops, has been chosen as a champion against yon champion, willing enough to discover what fate [he may expect] of Fortune<sup>1</sup> in time of need,—a man not to be despised either in form or spirit or in the fashion of his equipment. And with good reason did Hermes pair them ; for hostile is our hero to the champion with whom he will engage, and they twain will bring into conflict gods [depicted] on their shields who are hostile to each other. For the one bears [as device] fire-breathing Typhon, and Hyperbius has father Zeus, standing upright, planted upon the shield, making his thunder- 500 bolt blaze in his hand ; and no one, I think, yet saw Zeus vanquished. Such then is the favour of the divinities on both sides, we are on the side of the conquerors, they on that of the conquered. And, inasmuch as Zeus was conqueror of Typhon in battle, it is likely that the men opposed to each other will fare even as [the gods they bear]; and for Hyperbius, in conformity with his device, may Zeus prove a protector.

*Chorus.* I have full confidence that he who bears on his shield the unloved form of the under-world divinity who strove against Zeus, a presentment detestable to mankind and to the long-lived gods, will leave his head in front of our gate.

*Messenger.* May it prove so. I tell next of the fifth, who received the fifth station at the Borraean gate, over against the tomb of Zeus-born Amphion. He vows by

<sup>1</sup> ἔξιστορῆσαι μοῖραν τύχης=δαίμονος πειρᾶσθαι. *Choeph.* 511, *Ag.* 1163.

the spear which he carries, having the hardihood to reverence it more than any god and as more precious than his eyes, that surely he will sack the Cadmean city in spite of Zeus. Such is the speech of the handsome-faced offspring of a mountain-nurtured mother, a youth with a man's 520 spirit; and whiskers are just coming on his cheeks, his time of life producing them, thick hair growing up. And he, fierce in spirit that recalls not a maiden's name, and with grim countenance, stands nigh. Not indeed without a vaunting device does he station himself at the gate. On his bronze-wrought shield, the rounded defence of his body, he was swinging a Sphinx fastened to it with rivets, she that eats men raw, the reproach to our city, a shining figure hammered out from within. And beneath her she is carrying one of the Cadmeans, so that most shafts are 530 launched against this man. And now that he is come it is likely he will be no petty trafficker in battle,—nor bring discredit on his long journey hither,—Parthenopaeus of Arcadia. A man of such quality is he, who has left his country and in repayment to Argos for her care in rearing him to comely manhood is threatening against these towers things which may Heaven not accomplish.

*Eteocles.* Yes, for if they obtain from Heaven what they design against us, with those impious vaunts of theirs, in utter ruin and misery will they perish. For this one too, the Arcadian as thou callest him, is there a warrior who 540 boasts not, but his hand looks for vigorous employment, Actor; brother of him I named before; who will not suffer a tongue unattended by deeds to find its way within the gates and breed mischief, nor him that bears upon his hostile shield the image of a hateful monster to enter; but remaining outside she<sup>1</sup> shall have reason to complain of

<sup>1</sup> οξωθε δ' Hermann [οξωθεν M.]. Probably, however, there is a lacuna after v. 546.

him that seeks to carry her within, meeting with repeated batterings at the foot of the city-wall. And by favour of the gods I shall be found to speak true.<sup>1</sup>

*Chorus.* The tale goes through my heart: the tresses of 550 my lifted hair stand on end to hear<sup>2</sup> the high words of high-vaunting impious men. May the gods destroy them on our land.

*Messenger.* I will speak now of the sixth, a warrior of much modesty and valiant in combat, a seer,—the doughty Amphiaraus. Stationed at the Homoloian gate he is shouting repeatedly at the stalwart Tydeus with reproaches as, ‘the murderer, the troubler of the city, greatest teacher of evil ways to Argos, a priest<sup>3</sup> of Eriny, a minister of slaughter, and adviser of this evil course to Adrastus’; and, 560 again, . . .<sup>4</sup> uplifting his eyes, and twice reproachfully dividing the name at the end [of his speech], he calls thy brother *Poly-nices*: and from his mouth utters these words:—Is a deed like this acceptable to the gods and honourable for those who come after to hear and relate, an attempt to sack thy ancestral city and the [shrines of] thy kinsmen’s gods by launching against them an army of mercenaries. What 570 plea can extinguish [the guilt of] a mother’s murder? How shall thy motherland, made captive by the spear through thy rash enterprise, be thine ally? I myself shall doubtless enrich this soil with my blood, a seer lying in darkness beneath an enemy’s land. Let us to the combat: I look for death but not dishonour. Such words spoke the seer, handling his rounded shield of bronze; and upon its circle there was no device, for his wish is, not to appear, but to be, a man of merit—reaping the harvest of a furrow deep in 580

<sup>1</sup> The reading of this line is doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> κλέψειν Paley [*κλέψων* M.].

<sup>3</sup> ληγτῆρα H. L. Ahrens [*κληγτῆρα* M.].

<sup>4</sup> προσμύδραν ἀδελφεόν (563) is corrupt.

his mind, whence spring his worthy resolves. Against this man I advise thee to send an opponent wise and brave. Formidable is he who reverences the gods.

*Eteocles.* Alas, for the luck which in mortal affairs associates the just man with the impious ! In every undertaking nothing is worse than evil company : there no fruit is to be gathered. The [field of] infatuate daring has death produced as its harvest. Indeed a righteous man, embarked on a ship as associate of reckless sailors and some criminal 590 act, has ere now perished with the Heaven-detested crew. Or again, a just man associated with churlish citizens who forget the gods falling himself, in spite of his merits, into the same snare with them, has ere now been laid low by the scourge of Heaven that visits all alike. Even so the seer, I mean the son of Oecles, a man modest and just and brave and righteous, a prophet of renown, through his association with impious men of unbridled tongues, who are going a long march in despite of reason, shall by Zeus' will be dragged down with them to reach that far-off city. I think indeed that he will 600 not even assault the gate, not as being wanting in courage<sup>1</sup> or from cowardice of spirit ; but he knows in what fashion he is to meet his death in combat, if the divine warnings of Loxias bear fruit. And Loxias is wont either to keep silence, or to speak what is to the point. Yet will I station one to oppose him, the stalwart Lasthenes, a guardian of the gate surly to strangers. He shows a mature mind, though a youthful frame ; a man of<sup>2</sup> swift-glancing eye, and as to his hand,—he is not slow to snatch the naked 610 spear from alongside the shield. But a man's good fortune is the gift of Heaven.

*Chorus.* Ye gods who listen to these our just supplications, in order that the city may prosper make them accomplished,

<sup>1</sup> ἄθυμος Turnebus (*οὐχ ὡς δειλόν* scholiast) [*ἄθυμος* M.].

<sup>2</sup> The accusatives added, as commonly, in description.

turning from us the evils of war upon the invaders.<sup>1</sup> May Zeus cast them forth from the towers and destroy them with his thunderbolt.

*Messenger.* The seventh here at the seventh gate will I now tell of, thine own brother, the fate that he vows and prays for to befall our city. Standing upon the towers and having been proclaimed King to the whole land, raising in triumph a shout as over a captured city, [he vows] to engage with thee and having slain thee to die near by ; or, if he lives, to punish thee, as one who<sup>2</sup> dishonoured him by driving him from his home, with banishment in the same fashion as a revenge. Thus shouts the stalwart Polynices, and calls upon the gods of his family to see to the full accomplishment of his prayers. And he carries a handy buckler, newly wrought, and a device of two figures attached to it by rivets :—a Man in semblance of a warrior in beaten gold a Woman is leading, preceding him with modest gait. She declares herself to be Justice, as the letters announce, [with the legend], ‘I will restore this man from exile, and he shall have his city and the range of his ancestral home.’ Of such nature are the inventions of our foes. Do thou thyself now decide whom to send forth : for in regard to the present speaker thou wilt never find reason to complain of his report ; but it is for thee to decide of thyself how to guide the ship of state.

*Eteocles.* O miserable our race descended from Oedipus, infatuated by the Gods and an object of their hate ! Alas ! now indeed are my father’s curses being accomplished. Still it becomes us not either to wail or weep, lest [cause for] lamentation even harder to bear may be produced thereby. But for him so justly named, Polynices I mean,

<sup>1</sup> εἰς ἐπιμόλους Seidler.

<sup>2</sup> ἀτιμαστῆρά γ' ὡς Walter Headlam [τῶς mutatum in τὼς M., τὼς G. mutatum in θ' ὡς quod habet Taur.].

we shall soon know for certain in what that device of his will result: whether gold-wrought letters on his shield idly bragging in company with wandering of mind will bring him from exile. Had Justice, virgin daughter of Zeus, been companion of his deeds and mind, that would perhaps have come to pass. But neither when brought forth to light by 650 his mother, nor in his growth, nor when he reached youthful manhood, nor at the first harvest of a bearded chin, did Justice ever regard him or admit him to her presence; nor yet will she, I think, stand by to aid him in this evil treatment of his own land,—she who would falsely be named Justice if she associated with one of so reckless a mind. In this have I full confidence, and will engage with him 660 myself: what other has the better right?—prince with prince and brother with brother, foe with foe, I shall engage. Bring my greaves at once, my defences against point and stone.

*Chorus.* Child of Oedipus, most dear to us, prove not thyself like in temper to him that hath the worst of names. No! let it suffice that Cadmean warriors do battle with Argive; for blood so shed may be expiated. But of warriors who are brothers death thus inflicted by each other's hands —of pollution such as this there is no decay.

*Eteocles.* If indeed a man may suffer a wrong without 670 dishonour, then let it be so: that alone counts as gain among the dead. But of wrongs which involve disgrace, thou wilt find no glory to tell of.

*Chorus.* Child, for what art thou fain? Let not wrathful lust of combat infatuate carry thee away. Cast away from thee the beginnings of desire for evil.

*Eteocles.* Since Heaven is urging on the event, let the wave of Cocytus go with the breeze, having made its own the whole race of Laius that is abhorred of Phoebus.

*Chorus.* A fiercely gnawing desire doth impel thee to

accomplish slaughter bitter in its fruits by the shedding of blood forbidden to thee.

680

*Eteocles.* Aye, for nigh to me sits in anger the black<sup>1</sup> curse of my dear father with dry tearless eyes, telling me of gain which ranks before death which counts for less.

*Chorus.* But do not thou be hasty. Thou wilt not be called cowardly, since thou hast ordered thy life well [until now]. Erinys of dark ægis will go from the house when the gods receive propitiatory offerings at thy hands.

*Eteocles.* By the gods we are already it seems made of no account, and the favour they pay regard to is the favour of our death. Why then should we shrink before our fatal doom? 690

*Chorus.* [Seize the occasion] now when [doom] stands near at hand; since Fortune may yet<sup>2</sup> come with a fresher breeze in thy favour, shifting with a change of thy disposition made at the last moment, although now she is still stormy against thee.

*Eteocles.* [Stormy indeed] for the curses of Oedipus have broken out in fury. Too true were the visions assigning the division of our ancestral wealth, that appeared in dreams by night.

*Chorus.* Yield to women, although thou dislikest to do so.

*Eteocles.* Let something be said of which the doing is possible. No need of a long speech.

700

*Chorus.* Go not thou on this errand [to station thyself] at the seventh gate.

*Eteocles.* Now that I am whetted for the contest, thou wilt not blunt me with thy talk.

*Chorus.* Yet is there a victory, even if it means defeat, which the gods hold in honour.

*Eteocles.* It is not for a man who bears arms to approve such a saying.

<sup>1</sup> Reading provisionally  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\alpha\nu'$   $\grave{\alpha}\rho\grave{\alpha}$  Weil [ $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\grave{\iota}$   $\grave{\alpha}\rho\grave{\alpha}$  M.].

<sup>2</sup>  $\alpha\bar{v}$   $\tau\rho\omega\alpha\bar{v}\alpha$  Paley [ $\grave{\alpha}\nu\tau\rho\omega\alpha\bar{v}\alpha$  M.].

*Chorus.* Art thou willing to cull the fruit of a brother's murder?

*Eteocles.* When Heaven sends them thou canst not escape from misfortunes. [Exit ETEOCLES.]

*Chorus.* I shudder at the goddess who destroys homes, unlike to the other deities, prophet of evil true to the uttermost, Eriny of a father—invoked to fulfil the wrathful 710 imprecations of distraught Oedipus. This strife disastrous to his children is urging them on.

A Chalybian stranger is apportioning their shares, coming from his Scythian home as a fatal distributor of possessions,—the cruel steel, which hath allotted to them so much land to dwell in as they occupy in death, [deciding that] 720 they share not between them the broad plains.

When by each other's hand they shall have perished by mutual wounds, and the dust of earth hath drunk the dark-clotted blood of their slaughter, who can bring purification? who is to cleanse them [of their guilt]? O fresh troubles of the house mingling with ancient ill-fortune!

Of ancient origin I say was the transgression so swiftly avenged. To the third generation it remains, ever since 730 Laius in defiance of Apollo, after that the god had three times announced at the Pythian oracle at the centre of earth that by dying without offspring he would<sup>1</sup> preserve the State, yet over-persuaded by the foolish advice of those dear to him did beget his own destruction, Oedipus the son who slew his sire: even he who dared to sow the sacred field of his mother where he himself was fostered with a root [prolific of] bloodshed. It was aberration of mind that 740 brought to wedlock the insensate pair.

And, as it were, a surge of ills carries them along; one sinking, then it raises another with triple crest which

<sup>1</sup> The present infinitive represents the historic present habitual in oracular utterances, e.g. *Ag.* 131.

dashes at last over the poop the ship of State ; and between us [and the sea] our protection extends but a little way in thickness, [the breadth only of] a tower. I fear lest together with its kings the city may be laid low.

750

For of curses uttered of old brought now to effect<sup>1</sup> mournful is the reconciliation. Calamity passes by men of little substance, but wealth of traders when too densely packed causes wholesale throwing overboard [of cargo].

For what man did the gods and his fellow-citizens and the thronged meetings of men<sup>2</sup> so reverence as in days gone by they honoured Oedipus, when he removed from 760 the land the ravening goddess of death ?

But when he came to true knowledge, unhappy man, of his wretched marriage unable to bear his woes he wrought in his misery with frenzied heart a double mischief. With the hand that slew his sire, he deprived himself of his eyes dearer than his children,

And let loose against his children a curse, in anger at the 770 maintenance they afforded him—bitter-tongued curses alas ! even that they should divide his possessions with hands that settled their shares by the steel. And now I tremble lest nimble-footed Erinyes may bring [those curses] to effect.

(Enter MESSENGER.)

*Messenger.* Take courage, mother's darlings,<sup>3</sup> this city has escaped destruction. The vauntings of stalwart men are fallen low. The city is in calm, and from many buffetings 780 of the surge [of war] has let in no water ; the defences still are proof, and we keep the gates secure by our champions in single combat who have fulfilled their trust. At six of the gates all for the most part is well ; but the seventh has

<sup>1</sup> τελεῖαν Dindorf in Steph. τέλειος p. 1958 [τέλειαι M.].

<sup>2</sup> πολύβατος ex schol. Blomfield ; ἀγῶν Weil [πολύβοτός τ' αὐτῷ M.].

<sup>3</sup> Ironical, i.e. μαμιδθεπτοι. Cf. τηθαλλοδοῦς.

Apollo to whom sacrifice is offered on the seventh day taken for his own, bringing to their appointed end upon the race of Oedipus the errors of Laius.

*Chorus.* What new happening is then so advantageous to the city?

*Messenger.* The city is saved; the King's sons,<sup>1</sup> the warriors are dead of wounds inflicted by each other's hand.

790

*Chorus.* Who? What didst thou say? I am distraught with anxiety as to thy announcement.

*Messenger.* Listen now with sober mind. The two sons of Oedipus—

*Chorus.* Ah, woe is me! I have a presentiment of their evil fate.

*Messenger.* —in no doubtful fashion are indeed destroyed.

*Chorus.* Do they both lie yonder? Mournful though it be, yet explain thou all.

*Messenger.* . . . . .

*Chorus.* Were they thus so much disfigured each by his brother's hand?

*Messenger.* Even in this was their Fortune common to both. Of itself it now makes an end indeed of a luckless race. Such are the reasons we have to rejoice and to mourn—a city safe and sound, and on the other hand the leaders, the two captains, have received by hammer-wrought Scythian iron each their full property in the city's wealth. They will have for their own the ground they occupy in their burial, carried thither on the course set them by their father's curse. The city is saved; and the land has drunk the blood of two royal brothers through their slaughter of one another.

*Chorus.* O mighty Zeus, and guardian gods of our city

<sup>1</sup> This line, which interrupts the stichomuthia, was deleted by Porson as imported from v. 805.

who are the preservers of these towers of Cadmus, whether 810  
am I to rejoice and raise a cry of gladness for the security<sup>1</sup>  
which is our rescuer, or am I to bewail the leaders in war  
thus unfortunate, luckless, childless—who all too truly in  
accordance with their name ‘the men of strife’ have  
perished in impious intent?

O black Curse of Oedipus and his race now brought to  
accomplishment, a chill of sorrow falls upon my heart!  
Inspired [by grief], I compose a dirge for the grave, now 820  
that I hear of their corpses dripping blood by evil fate thus  
dead. Ill-omened indeed was their concert of spears.

It worked to fulfilment, nor did it relax—that solemn  
utterance from a father’s lips; and the resolves of Laius  
due to his want of faith have had effect till now. Anxiety  
remains as to the city; for divine warnings do not lose  
their potency. Ah! ye whom we bewail, this that we 830  
never looked for have ye done, and lamentable grief has  
come out of all reason.

(*The bearers carrying the corpses come into view.*)

Here now all is plain of itself. What the messenger told  
is now before our eyes. Twofold is our grief, double the  
evil fortune they have brought upon themselves, double the  
fated calamity now fulfilled. What shall I say? What  
else than that trouble is in the house? Come, dear ones,  
as the breeze of sorrow carries us along, wave your hands  
about your heads as ye escort the dead, in rhythmic move-  
ment which accompanies the passage across Acheron of the 840  
unvoyaging ship with black sails, that is not trodden for  
the God of Day nor knows the sun, to the unseen landing-  
place that is the bourne of all.

But see, here are come Antigone and Ismene for this

<sup>1</sup> Reading provisionally σωτῆρι πόλεως ἀσινέια Hermann [π. ἀσινέι  
σ. M.].

mournful office, a dirge for their brethren. In no half-hearted fashion, I trow, will they for their loved ones utter from their deep-girdled bosoms a [strain of] grief befitting 850 the occasion. Us it behoves to sing, before their voice is heard, the sad-sounding Erinys-song and to raise thereafter the unwelcome Hades-chant. O ye most luckless in their brethren of all women who clasp the girdle about their robes, I weep for you and wail; and it is no guile to say that truly from my heart I raise this loud lament.

O misguided men, who would not be persuaded by your 860 friends, and in misfortune inexhaustible; unhappy ones, who ruined your ancestral homes by recourse to the spear.—Unhappy ones indeed, for ye found unhappy deaths, fraught with disaster to your house.

O ye who overthrew the walls of your home, and came to the sight of a fatal kingship, now are ye reconciled by recourse to the steel.—The awful curse of your father 870 Oedipus wrought a fulfilment true in deed. Stricken through the left sides, aye, stricken through sides born of a common mother, alas! thou wondrous ones; alas! for the curses resulting in death by each other's hand.—A home-thrust to house and body was [the blow] whereby thou sayest they were smitten in wrath that bears not telling, by a destiny due to a father's curse which they shared alike. 880

Through the city too there goes a sound of wailing; the towers groan, and the plain that loved her heroes groans; whilst the possessions through which came strife, through which came doom of death to the ill-fated ones, will be for their descendants.—They made in their bitter wrath such 890 division of the possessions between themselves that each has now an equal share. The arbitrator at any rate has no blame from the friends [of either party], nor is Ares hailed as showing favour [to either side].

By the stroke of the steel they are as they are now, and

by stroke of steel there awaits them—what? some one may say—their share in the ancestral tomb.—A loud-sounding cry<sup>1</sup> escorts them, a lamentation for these two princes, 900 heart-rending, bewailing its own griefs and its own woes, in anguish of mind, with no thought of joy, weeping tears that are truly from my heart, which as I mourn is wasting away.

[As epitaph] over the unhappy pair one may say, Much sorrow did they bring on their citizens and on all the ranks of foreigners who were destroyed in battle.—Hapless 910 beyond all women who have the name of mother was she who bore them. Having taken as husband her own son, she bore these princes; who have met their end, as ye see, in mutual slaughter each by the hand of his brother.

Brothers indeed, and now utterly destroyed by wounds unkind in frenzied strife as a termination to their feud.—Their hatred is stilled, and their life-blood is mingled with 920 the gory dust: thus are they united by blood indeed. A fatal resolver of contentions was the stranger that came from over-sea, the whetted steel; and fatal was that ill-divider of possessions, Ares, who brought to fulfilment their father's curse.

They have their shares, unhappy men, of heaven-sent sorrows, receiving each his portion; and underneath their 930 bodies they shall have a bottomless wealth of earth.—O ye who have made your family blossom forth in many a sorrow, at the last have the Curses cried over you their high-pitched strain, now that the whole race has been put to flight in utter rout. A monument of Calamity is set up at the gates, whereat they were done to death; and the divinity ceased its work when it laid both of them low.

*Antigone.* Struck thou didst strike again.

*Ismene.* And thou in slaying wert slain.

940

<sup>1</sup> Reading provisionally ἀχαρεστὸν λα Weil.

*Ant.* By the spear thou didst kill. *Ism.* By the spear thou diedst.

*Ant.* Miserable thy deed. *Ism.* Miserable thy fate.

*Ant.* Let lament go forth. *Ism.* Let tears go forth.

*Antigone and Ismene.* Thou liest low in death.

*Ant.* Ah me! *Ism.* Ah me!

*Ant.* My mind is distraught with wailing. *Ism.* My heart within me sighs.

*Ant.* O thou most lamentable. *Ism.* And thou too, most unhappy.

*Ant.* By one dear to thee didst thou perish. *Ism.* And one dear to thee didst thou slay.

*Ant.* A twofold sorrow to relate. *Ism.* A twofold grief to see.

*Ant.* Near to such griefs is this.<sup>1</sup> *Ism.* And here sisters near to sisters.

*Antigone and Ismene.* O grievous Fate, giver of ill gifts, and awful shade of Oedipus, a black Curse mighty indeed in power art thou!

*Ant.* Ah me! *Ism.* Ah me!

*Ant.* Disaster sad to see *Ism.* have ye shown to me after banishment.

*Ant.* This one came with intent to slay,<sup>2</sup> *Ism.* and on that errand lost his life.

*Ant.* He perished indeed, *Ism.* and slew this one here.

*Ant.* Hapless race! *Ism.* Hapless affliction!

*Ant.* Lamentable in their relationship and lamentable in their woe.

*Ism.* Steeped in calamity thrice over.<sup>3</sup>

*Antigone and Ismene.* O grievous Fate, giver of ill gifts,

<sup>1</sup> The text in this and the following line is uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> κατακτενῶν Halm [κατάκτανεν M.].

<sup>3</sup> Possibly δίδυμα τριπλᾶ τε should be read.

and awful shade of Oedipus, a black curse mighty indeed in power art thou !

*Ant.* Thou knowest [thy destiny] by going through it, 980

*Ism.* And thou art no whit behind in knowledge of thine,

*Ant.* —when thou didst return to the city,

*Ism.* —aye, as opponent to this man here in combat.

*Ant.* Deadly it is to tell. *Ism.* Deadly it is to see.

*Ant.* O trouble ! *Ism.* O sorrow !

*Ant.* —to home and land, *Ism.* —aye, and moreover to me.

*Ant.* O prince, man of grievous misery ! *Ism.* O ye ful- 990  
filled of sorrows beyond all men !

*Antigone and Ismene.* O ye whom all divinities impelled on your fatal course !

*Ant.* O where shall we lay them in earth ? *Ism.* O wheresoever is most honourable.

*Antigone and Ismene.* O calamity that was mated with their father !

(Enter the HERALD.)

*Herald.* It is my office to announce what by the chief advisers of the city of Cadmus has been, and is, decreed. Eteocles yonder, for his friendship towards this country, it is resolved to bury with loving interment in the earth ; for it was in striving to keep out the foe that he got his own death 1000 at this city. Pure in respect of the shrines of his ancestors and free from blame, he is dead [on the field of battle] where 'tis honourable for a young man to die. Thus with respect to him is it enjoined upon me to proclaim. But this man's brother, the dead body yonder of Polynices, [it is resolved] to cast out unburied, a prey to dogs, as one that would have been destroyer of the Cadmean town unless some divinity had stood in the way of his spear ; and even

in death he shall have [the brand of] guilt in respect of his ancestral gods, without regard for whom he sought to take this city by launching against it a band of mercenaries. So 1010 it is decreed that he shall receive his reward by being buried in unseemly wise by the fowls of the air; and there shall attend him neither raising of a mound by hand nor shall any show him respect with loud strains of mourning, but he shall be without honour of burial by his friends. Such is the decree of the Cadmean authority.

*Antigone.* Aye, but this have I to say to the Cadmean authorities:—Though none other consent to aid me in burying this man, I myself will bury him, and will undertake the risk of burying my own brother; nor am I ashamed at incurring [the reproach of] disobedience that refuses 1020 submission to the State. A mighty influence is the common blood whence we are sprung, from an unhappy mother and an ill-fated sire. Willingly, therefore, for one who would not have willed it so, does my heart—the living for the dead—take a share in his misfortunes in sisterly spirit. His flesh never shall empty-bellied wolves gorge upon. Let no one think it. For I, though but a woman, will of myself contrive a tomb and [means of] interment for him, carrying [earth] 1030 in the bosom of my linen robe, and with my own hands will cover him. Let no one think the contrary. To my courage a plan will occur that will prove effective.

*Herald.* I give thee notice not to act in defiance of the State in this matter.

*Antigone.* I give notice to thee not to make useless proclamations to me.

*Herald.* Yet the people is severe, now that it has escaped danger.

*Antigone.* Talk as you will of severity. This man shall not be deprived of burial.

*Herald.* But wilt thou honour one whom the city hates?

*Antigone.* Yes, for his condition is not beyond honour in the sight of the gods.

*Herald.* It was not so, before he brought his country into danger.

*Antigone.* Having suffered wrong, he was but requiting it with wrong.

*Herald.* But against all the citizens, instead of against one man only, was this enterprise of his directed.

*Antigone.* Contention is the last of the goddesses to make an end of her tale. But I shall bury this man. Spare thy speeches.

*Herald.* Well, be self-willed ; but I forbid thee to do it.

*Chorus.* Alas, alas ! O high-vaunting fatal Furies, ruiners of the race, who have thus destroyed root and branch the stock of Oedipus ! what is to be my fate, what am I to do ? What shall I attempt ? How shall I endure neither to bewail thee, nor escort thee to the tomb ? Yet am I afraid, and would fain avoid having dread of my own citizens. Thou indeed shalt find many to be thy mourners ; but he there shall go unwept for, having only the single voice of a sister's lament. Who is there would so far yield obedience ?

*Semichorus.* Let the city punish those who mourn for Polynices, or let it not ; for we here will go as his escort, and aid in burying him. For this grief is shared by all his race, whereas the city approves, now one way of justice, now another.

*Semichorus.* And we will go with this one here, as the city and justice join in approving. For, next to the Blessed Ones and the might of Zeus, this was he who chiefly rescued the Cadmean city from being overwhelmed, and submerged by a wave of foreign folk.

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